

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A game apparatus, having connected thereto operation means with which a player operates a character, the game apparatus
5 outputting to display means a game screen containing characters which are operable with the operation means, comprising:

map storage means for storing map data based on which to display a game space;

character storage means for storing data of a first
10 character and a second character which are operable by players;

operation detecting means for detecting an operation made to the operation means;

character switching means for switching an operable character by the operation means when a predetermined condition
15 is satisfied;

first character operation controlling means for, when the character switching means selects the first character to be the operable character, controlling the first character in accordance with the operation made to the operation means;

20 first game screen output means for, when the first character operation controlling means controls the first character, outputting a first game screen representing a relatively broad extent of the game space containing the first character and the second character, based on the map data in the map storage means
25 and the data in the character storage means;

second character operation controlling means for, when the character switching means selects the second character to be the operable character, controlling the second character in accordance with the operation made to the operation means; and

5 second game screen output means for, when the second character operation controlling means controls the second character, outputting a second game screen representing a relatively narrow extent of the game space containing the second character, based on the map data in the map storage means and the
10 data in the character storage means.

2. The game apparatus according to claim 1,
wherein,

the operation means comprises:

15 first operation means to be used by a first player;
and

 second operation means to be used by a second player
distinct from the first player,

the display means comprises:

20 first display means for displaying a personal screen
to be viewed by only one player; and

 second display means for displaying a common screen
to be viewed by all participating players,

 the character switching means switches the operable
25 character for the first player and the operable character for the

second player when the predetermined condition is satisfied,

the first game screen output means outputs the first game screen to the first display means, and

the second game screen output means outputs the second
5 game screen to the second display means.

3. The game apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the first operation means is a hand-held type game apparatus including the first display means and a manipulable element with which to
10 operate the first character.

4. The game apparatus according to claim 3, comprising a plurality of second operation means to be operated by a plurality of second players,

15 wherein the second game screen output means outputs to the second display means a plurality of second game screens for the respective second characters operable with the plurality of second operation means, the plurality of second game screens not overlapping one another.

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5. The game apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising residual image displaying control means for displaying, after the first character has passed through the second game screen, a residual image along a trajectory of the first character for
25 a predetermined period of time.

6. The game apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising display region changing means for changing, for a predetermined period of time after a certain condition is satisfied, the second game screen so as to represent an extent of the game space which is broader than and encompasses the relatively narrow extent containing the second character.

7. The game apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:

score storage means including a first score storage area and a second score storage area;

table generation/update means for generating table data for making associations between the first score storage area and the first player and the operable character for the first player, and associations between the second score storage area and the second player and the operable character for the second player, and updating the associations when the character switching means switches the operable characters;

score adding means for, each time the first character scores points, cumulatively adding the points; and

score writing means for, by referring to the table data, writing the points added by the score adding means to the first score storage area when the first player is associated with the first character, and writing the points added by the score adding

means to the second score storage area when the second player is associated with the first character.

8. The game apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the
5 second game screen output means outputs a radar screen for displaying only a position of the second character in the entire game space to the second display means, the radar screen being displayed together with the second game screen.

10 9. A recording medium having recorded thereon a game program to be executed by a computer in a game apparatus having connected thereto operation means with which a player operates a character, the game program causing the game apparatus to output to display means a game screen containing characters which are
15 operable with the operation means, and causing the computer to function as:

map storage means for storing map data based on which to display a game space;

20 character storage means for storing data of a first character and a second character which are operable by players;

operation detecting means for detecting an operation made to the operation means;

25 character switching means for switching an operable character by the operation means when a predetermined condition is satisfied;

first character operation controlling means for, when the character switching means selects the first character to be the operable character, controlling the first character in accordance with the operation made to the operation means;

5 first game screen output means for, when the first character operation controlling means controls the first character, outputting a first game screen representing a relatively broad extent of the game space containing the first character and the second character, based on the map data in the map storage means
10 and the data in the character storage means;

second character operation controlling means for, when the character switching means selects the second character to be the operable character, controlling the second character in accordance with the operation made to the operation means; and

15 second game screen output means for, when the second character operation controlling means controls the second character, outputting a second game screen representing a relatively narrow extent of the game space containing the second character, based on the map data in the map storage means and the
20 data in the character storage means.

10. The recording medium according to claim 9,
wherein,
the operation means comprises:

25 first operation means to be used by a first player;

and

second operation means to be used by a second player
distinct from the first player;

the display means comprises:

5 first display means for displaying a personal screen
to be viewed by only one player; and

second display means for displaying a common screen
to be viewed by all participating players, and

the game program causes the computer to function so that:

10 the character switching means switches the operable
character for the first player and the operable character for the
second player when the predetermined condition is satisfied;

the first game screen output means outputs the first
game screen to the first display means; and

15 the second game screen output means outputs the second
game screen to the second display means.

11. The recording medium according to claim 10,
wherein,

20 the first operation means is a hand-held type game
apparatus including the first display means and a manipulable
element with which to operate the first character, and

the game program causes the computer to function so that
the first game screen output means outputs the first game screen
25 to the first display means of the hand-held type game apparatus.

12. The recording medium according to claim 11,
wherein the game apparatus further comprises a plurality
of second operation means to be operated by a plurality of second
5 players,

wherein the game program causes the computer to function
so that the second game screen output means outputs to the second
display means a plurality of second game screens for the respective
second characters operable with the plurality of second operation
10 means, the plurality of second game screens not overlapping one
another.

13. The recording medium according to claim 9, wherein
the game program causes the computer to further function as residual
15 image displaying control means for displaying, after the first
character has passed through the second game screen, a residual
image along a trajectory of the first character for a predetermined
period of time.

20 14. The recording medium according to claim 9, wherein
the game program causes the computer to further function as display
region changing means for changing, for a predetermined period
of time after a certain condition is satisfied, the second game
screen so as to represent an extent of the game space which is
25 broader than and encompasses the relatively narrow extent

containing the second character.

15. The recording medium according to claim 10, wherein the game program causes the computer to further function as:

5 score storage means including a first score storage area and a second score storage area;

 table generation/update means for generating table data for making associations between the first score storage area and the first player and the operable character for the first player,
10 and associations between the second score storage area and the second player and the operable character for the second player, and updating the associations when the character switching means switches the operable characters;

 score adding means for, each time the first character
15 scores points, cumulatively adding the points; and

 score writing means for, by referring to the table data, writing the points added by the score adding means to the first score storage area when the first player is associated with the first character, and writing the points added by the score adding
20 means to the second score storage area when the second player is associated with the first character.

16. The recording medium according to claim 10, wherein the game program causes the computer to function so that the second
25 game screen output means outputs a radar screen for displaying

only a position of the second character in the entire game space to the second display means, the radar screen being displayed together with the second game screen.

5 17. A game system for playing a network game comprising a plurality of terminal devices coupled to a network, each terminal device including:

 operation means with which a player operates a character;

 map storage means for storing map data based on which
10 to display a game space;

 character storage means for storing data of a first character and a second character which are operable by players;

 operation detecting means for detecting an operation made to the operation means;

15 character switching means for switching an operable character by the operation means when a predetermined condition is satisfied;

 first character operation controlling means for, when the character switching means selects the first character to be
20 the operable character, controlling the first character in accordance with the operation made to the operation means;

 first game screen output means for, when the first character operation controlling means controls the first character, outputting a first game screen representing a relatively broad
25 extent of the game space containing the first character and the

second character, based on the map data in the map storage means and the data in the character storage means;

second character operation controlling means for, when the character switching means selects the second character to be
5 the operable character, controlling the second character in accordance with the operation made to the operation means; and

second game screen output means for, when the second character operation controlling means controls the second character, outputting a second game screen representing a
10 relatively narrow extent of the game space containing the second character, based on the map data in the map storage means and the data in the character storage means.

18. A game system comprising: at least one hand-held
15 type game apparatus having a display section and an operation section operable by a player; a plurality of operation means which are operable by players; a game apparatus for outputting a game screen in which to display characters which are operated within a game space respectively by means of the operation section of
20 the hand-held type game apparatus and the plurality of operation means; and display means for displaying an image based on the output game screen,

wherein,

the game apparatus includes:

25 map storage means for storing map data based on which

to display the game space;

character storage means for storing data of a first character and a second character which are operable by players;

first character operation controlling means for
5 controlling the first character in accordance with an operation made to the operation section of the hand-held type game apparatus;

second character operation controlling means for controlling the second character in accordance with an operation made to the operation means;

10 first game screen output means for outputting to the hand-held type game apparatus a first game screen representing a relatively broad extent of the game space containing at least the first character and the second character, based on the map data in the map storage means and the data in the character storage
15 means; and

second game screen output means for outputting to the display means a second game screen representing a relatively narrow extent of the game space containing the second character, based on the map data in the map storage means and the data in
20 the character storage means,

the hand-held type game apparatus displays the first game screen which is output from the first game screen output means on the display section, and

the display means displays the second game screen which
25 is output from the second game screen output means.